The Reconstructionist

Volume XIII. November 28, 1947 Kislev 15, 5708 No. 15

- *ARE THE TEACHINGS OF JESUS THE LAST WORD IN ETHICS?*
  by Immanuel Lewy

- *TOWARD COOPERATION BETWEEN SYNAGOGUE, COMMUNITY COUNCIL AND COMMUNITY CENTER*
  by Max Weine

- *A COMMENTARY ON PALESTINE POLITICS—(Review)*
  by Ben Halpern

dicated to the advancement of Judaism as a religious civilization, to the upbuilding of el's ancient homeland, and to the furtherance of universal freedom, justice and peace.

the Reconstructionist

is published bi-weekly for twenty consecutive issues, starting in October, by the Jewish Reconstructionist Foundation, Inc., 15 West 86th Street, New York 24, N. Y. Subscription $2.00 per year; 10c per copy; foreign 25c extra; membership in the Foundationn, $5.00 per year, including subscription to *The Reconstructionist*. Reentered as second class matter October 3, 1935, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879.

EDITORIAL BOARD:
Chairman: **Mordecai M. Kaplan**
Associate Chairman: **Ira Eisenstein**
Managing Editor: **Eugene Kohn**

Associate Editors: **Israel S. Chipkin, Judith K. Eisenstein, Theodore Friedman, Roland B. Gittelsohn, Jacob S. Golub, Emanuel Green, Bernard Heller, Will Herberg, Aharon Kessler, Edward T. Sandrow, Judah Shapiro, Milton Steinberg, Bernard Weinryb, Max Wiener.**

Contributing Editors: **Morris Adler, Michael Alper, Nathan A. Barack, Morton M. Berman, Philip S. Bernstein, Asher Block, Samuel M. Blumenfield, Ben-Zion Bokser, William J. Boxerman, Jack J. Cohen, Mortimer J. Cohen, Lawrence W. Crohn, Samuel Dinin, Harry Essrig, Emanuel Gamoran, Judah I. Goldin Solomon Goldman, Robert Gordis, Samuel C. Kohs, Milton Konvitz, Myer S. Kripke, Louis M. Levitsky Theodore N. Lewis, Joshua Loth Liebman, Sidney Morgenbesser, Maurice Pekarsky, David Polish, Joshua Trachtenberg, Leo Trepp, Max Weine, Jacob J. Weinstein.**

Executive Secretary: **Hannah L. Goldberg**

AMONG OUR CONTRIBUTORS

BEN HALPERN is Managing Editor of the *Jewish Frontier.*

IMMANUEL LEWY, formerly of Germany, has written many articles dealing with various aspects of religion.

MAX WEINE is rabbi of Congregation Beth Israel, Camden, N. J., and a contributing editor to THE RECONSTRUCTIONIST.

All books reviewed in *The Reconstructionist* and other books of interest may be obtained from the Reconstructionist Book Department, 15 West 86th Street, New York 24, N. Y.

Reprinted by Popular Demand

THE MEANING OF GOD IN MODERN JEWISH RELIGION

By MORDECAI M. KAPLAN

This significant work interpreting the Sabbath, the Holydays and the Festivals in terms of modern thought can now be obtained.

381 pages with index $3.00 per copy

A study syllabus entitled

JEWISH RELIGIOUS BELIEF FOR TODAY

is available for use with this book.

Fifty cents per copy.

JEWISH RECONSTRUCTIONIST FOUNDATION, Inc.,
15 West 86th Street, New York 24, N. Y.

Please send me ..... copies of THE MEANING OF GOD IN MODERN JEWISH RELIGION.

Please send me ..... copies of the syllabus JEWISH RELIGIOUS BELIEF FOR TODAY.

Check for $..... is enclosed.

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

The Reconstructionist

Volume XIII. November 28, 1947 Kislev 15, 5708 No. 15

EDITORIALS

A STEP IN DEMOCRATIZING JEWISH COMMUNAL LIFE

THERE have been all kinds of *drives* in Jewish life; but one drive, of which many Jews are not aware, is the drive to democratize Jewish life itself. Fortunately, in recent months, that drive has been growing more popular. As was to be expected, more rights and more responsibilities have been gained by the local communal agencies through their own efforts; nothing has been "granted" on the initiative of central authorities. Whatever growth in democracy American Jewry has witnessed has come from the grass roots of American Jewry, from the maturing of our local Jewish communities.

Recently, the Council of Federations and Welfare Funds held a conference in Pittsburgh of the representatives of the thirty largest Jewish communities in the United States to plan ways and means of meeting the 1948 obligations of American Jewry to the Jews of Europe and Eretz Yisrael. A five point program was adopted which marked a signal advance toward greater participation by the masses of Jews in vital decisions. The plan calls for setting national goals and establishing local quotas in consultation with community representatives. Of the thirty largest communities, some are not yet represented on the executive committee of the United Jewish Appeal. They will be asked to serve in an advisory capacity.

In order to "achieve the common purpose of the UJA and the communities," the program states, "there should be a closer working partnership between them through more frequent meetings and greater use of the executive committee by the UJA for all policy decisions by which the communities are directly or indirectly affected." The representatives of the communities, however, are urged to bring to the executive committee the opinions and suggestions which reach them from the rank and file of the Jews in their respective communities. In this way, the representatives will really represent the localities from which they come.

The final item on the program calls for reports by the community representatives to their communities and to the Council regions which selected them. Thus, the local groups may be kept in close touch with the deliberations of the national body.

These are clearly steps in the right direction. The question, however, with which we are concerned is: what are the ultimate purposes of this democratizing process? Are they merely to facilitate fund-raising, to insure "more effective campaigns?" Or are these developments intended as part of a broad effort to insure a Jewish future in the United States?

Vast sums of money are expended; and much energy is invested in these annual—almost continuous—drives. But unless the process of fund-raising and fund-spending is used to educate the Jewish people in the purposes of these enterprises, and unless the ethical and spiritual calibre of Jewry is raised by means of them, a magnificent opportunity is lost. The purposes that are served by these drives represent the very substance of what we mean by the term "Jewish life." If Jews are to live intelligently, they must be given more than the minimum knowledge and emotional stimulation necessary to persuade them to part with their money. An intelligent grasp of the needs of our people and of the value of satisfying those needs is required. What a man spends his money on represents what he holds to be worthwhile. The same applies to a people. Therefore the project of raising funds must never be separated from the discussion of what makes the expenditure of the funds worth the personal self-denial it involves. The Jewish values which we try to impress on people through Jewish education are meaningless verbalization without reference to those projects that call for financial support, and the effort at securing that support is mere extortion through social pressure when divorced from the realization of the needs and values of Jewish life.

There is a pitiful dearth of understanding of the significance of such stesps as the Council recently took. Jews who are affected by it are not given an interpretation of it which helps them evaluate it correctly. An example of the sort of thing that needs to be done was provided by the Philadelphia community, a few years ago. The religious schools of the city were supplied with a syllabus to study the structure of the community campaign, and the nature and functions of the various beneficiaries. But that is only one instance. Educational activity on an adult level is no less important.

The upsurge of democratic sentiment is now quite apparent. The local communities are asserting themselves. Now is the time to direct this "drive" into educational channels, so that the coming years will witness the establishment of truly democratic community organizations, dedicated to the advancement of a culturally enriched, and ethically mature Jewish life.

WHY JEWISH LAW IS NOT CHANGED

A DIFFICULT problem is agitating the Jews of England: shall liberal (in America we call them Reform) rabbis be permitted to administer marriage rites?

The situation is described in an article by Henry Solomon in the October issue of *Liberal Judaism.* In England, religious marriages are not recognized, unless a civil ceremony is also carried out, either separately or at the same time as the religious ceremony. In the latter case, the minister or other official of the church or synagogue must have been appointed as a "marriage secretary." By act of Parliament, the certification of marriage secretaries is vested in the President of the Board of Deputies of British Jews. The Board of Deputies, by its own constitution, makes such first certification of marriage secretaries dependent upon a certificate from the ecclesiastical authorities that the congregation concerned actually is a "congregation of Jews."

Under the administration of the late Chief Rabbi Hertz, two Liberal congregations were certified as being congregations of Jews, but since then many more have arisen and applied for certification. The eccesiastical authorities, being Orthodox, opposed their admission. It was

then moved to amend the constitution of the Board of Deputies so that Liberal congregations might be certified by the president of the Liberal Synagogue of St. John's Wood, London, one of those admitted under Dr. Hertz's regime. While this motion was pending, the Bet Din issued a *pesak din* (legal decision) that whoever supported the amendment, "would have on his conscience the terrible guilt of being *marbeh mamzerim beyisrael.*"

The basis of this decision is the fact that it is the practice of Liberal Jews to perform marriages when one of the parties was divorced according to civil law without the formality of the *get* or Jewish divorce. Jewish law does not regard the civil divorce without a Jewish religious divorce as dissolving the marriage. Hence the remarriage of one of the parties without a *get* is adultery and the children of such marriage are *mamzerim* (illegitimate).

The problem, in the form in which it exists in Britain, does not apply to American Jewry, or to Jewry in any other country where there is a complete separation of church and state. In such countries, any section of Jewry can set up its own standard of religious conduct without consulting "ecclesiastical authorities" recognized by the state. The implications of the problem, however, do exist for us too and are very grave.

That Jewish marriage law in its traditional form is in need of revision should be apparent to all right-thinking Jews. Those laws were made at a time when the social status of woman was definitely subordinate to that of man. They were made at a time, moreover, when the Jews were living in their own land and were not citizens of nations whose religious belief and legal practice differed from theirs. As those laws operate today, they provide opportunity for extortion as the price of liberation from a marriage bond that has already broken down. But can these laws be revised, and how?

There are three different attitudes toward the revision of Jewish law. One would ignore Jewish law rather than revise it, leaving the domestic relations of Jews to be determined entirely by the law of the state. Another attitude would accept the law and deny the need for revision. A third attitude admits the need for revision but is impeded by a number of considerations from doing anything about it.And so we have the unhappy situation that marriages performed by some rabbis are not recognized by other rabbis and their lay following as valid.

Let us examine each of these attitudes more closely.

The first attitude is that of Reform. By sanctioning the marriage of persons who have been given only a civil divorce by the state, Reform virtually abrogates the authority of the Jewish religious community to set up any standards of its own with respect to eligibility for marriage or grounds for divorce. In view of the religious importance of the home, that abrogation of authority is a serious one. Nobody questions the right of the state to govern the domestic relations of its citizens, but for the Jewish community to renounce the authority to lay down concurrent rules which do not involve disobedience to state law is a serious surrender.

The intransigent Orthodox, who see no need for revision, base their attitude on the assumption that the Law is of divine origin. Since, of necessity, "the Law of the Lord is perfect," man is forbidden either to "add to it or subtract from it." If it works hardship, such hardship must be accepted with pious resignation in the faith that God will somehow redress the balance, if not in this life then in the "world to come." The moment, however,

that we assume that Jewish law is of human authorship and therefore fallible, its amendment, wherever it works injustice, becomes a matter of conscience.

Conservative Jews generally admit that Jewish law is in need of revision. But they do nothing to change it. They explain away this inactivity by various rationalizations.

One such rationalization is the doctrine that religious law, like natural law, cannot operate to everybody's advantage and that the mere fact that some people suffer under its provisions is insufficient reason for changing it. That argument is on a par with the arguments once used by the churches against the application of scientific medicine: since it is in the nature of things that some organisms should sicken and die, it is impious for human beings to interfere with nature's divine plan. Maybe men cannot devise a system of laws that shall involve no suffering anywhere. It nevertheless devolves on us to do all we can to make law contribute the maximum to human welfare and involve the minimum of human suffering.

Another common rationalization is that, though the law is subject to evolutionary change, it may only be changed by procedures sanctioned by the law itself, i.e., by judicial interpretation rather than legislative amendment. Since, however, the Law antedates the modern machinery of legislative democracy and vests all authority in the hands of those who are not only learned in the tradition but also accept it as divinely revealed, its revision is left dependent on those who see no need for revising it. The Board of Deputies of British Jews may want the law changed, but the "ecclesiastical authorities" in the *Bet Din,* can by reason of this rationalization overrule the democratic representation of British Jewry.

There will not be any change in Jewish law until Jewry turns from theocratic to democratic assumptions in the government of its communal life. That is the Reconstructionist attitude toward the problem. Reconstructionists also are at present impotent to make any direct change in Jewish law. But we realize what must be done as a preliminary to such change—the reorganization of Jewry on a democratic representative plan. In a constitutional democracy, law can be changed by the people who are to be governed by the law. It does not have to wait for sanction from an ecclesiastical authority which administers a code that has no provision for amendment. To change the meaning of a law by judicial construction is not an interpretation of it but a misinterpretation. There will always be enough sincere traditionalists to insist on a correct interpretation and thus to prevent necessary change. Only the *revolution* of democratizing our religious life by providing means of legislative amendment can make possible the further *evolution* of Jewish law.

IT IS STILL ONE WORLD

PRESIDENT TRUMAN'S speech to the Special Session of Congress on November 17 demonstrates very clearly that this is indeed one world. European recovery and American stability are indivisible. The reaction of some Republican leaders and of some prominent business executives to the President's message indicates just as forcefully that they either have not yet discovered this fundamental truth or that they do not wish to recognize it.

The Special Session was called to consider assistance to Europe, specifically the Marshall Plan, both its short term provisions and its long range proposals. The President realized that Congress could not deal with the problem of immediate and long term aid to European nations with-

out at the same time handling the problem of inflation at home.

To fight inflation for the relief of the American consumer and, also, to assure the best possible measure of aid to Europe, the President proposed to Congress a ten point program. Among other things, he recommends: "selective" price controls; "selective" consumer rationing; "selective" wage ceilings; regulation of speculative trading in commodities; strengthening of export controls; rent control; the allocation and the control of inventory in scarce commodities.

No sooner had the President completed his message than the fur began to fly. Republican members of Congress attacked the proposals with such shopworn epithets as "reaction," "police state," "turning the clock backward," "dictatorial powers." And Senator Lee O'Daniel (D., Texas) shouted: "radical Communist opiates!" Senator Taft, in his radio address that same evening, (a fact which would seem to signify that he was the spokesman for his Republican colleagues), assaulted the entire program as "reaction and a step to a completely totalitarian nation." "The way to hold prices down," he said, "is for the government to spend less money and reduce taxes, to limit exports and to hold the Marshall Plan within a reasonable figure and to control the growth of private credit. . . ." What government services would Senator Taft abandon to save money? Tax reductions increase purchasing power which in turn forces prices up. How then can we have low prices and tax reductions at the same time? What is a "reasonable figure" for European relief? Mr. Taft does not disclose the answers to these questions.

It is regrettable that we seem to be in for a long, drawn-out political struggle. We had hoped that such fundamental matters as the alleviation of human suffering, the assurance to Americans of decent living standards and a fair share of the country's wealth, matters upon which the very existence of our democracy depends, would be above partisan politics. But the 1948 election is around the corner. The Administration which proposes legislation bears a different political label than the Congress which disposes. Perhaps it was naive to believe that such *practical* considerations could be subordinated to such a *human* motive as acting in behalf of the public welfare.

We are not here assessing the value of the President's program nor are we commenting on its practicability. What we are trying to assert, however, is that the principle of giving help to needy nations is a matter of enlightened self-interest, and that such aid is impossible without at the same time imposing curbs on our own desires. Any other view means a return to selfish isolationism. We cannot have relief without stabilization, we cannot have stabilization without controls, and we cannot have controls without government "interference." There is the rub. The logic of the opponents of government control is difficult to follow but their psychological motivation is transparent. They just do not like government to "meddle" in business.

The measures proposed by the President are all recognized as effective weapons in combating inflation. But since government action is implicit in each, the entire program is rejected by the President's opponents who still insist that free initiative, free competition and individual enterprise will bring about a natural adjustment in a free market. Rather than endorse the principle of government intervention when necessary, they would endanger the delicate balance of our economy and water down the Marshall Plan.

Someone is playing politics. In this instance, we do not think it is the President.

Earlier in his administration, he lifted controls too precipitately. He yielded to the pressure of vested interests, to the threats of political reprisals. He advocated a weak system of voluntary controls which could not do the job. In this message to Congress, however, he has acknowledged these mistakes and now seeks to remedy them. There may be an honest difference of opinion as to the necessity for some of the provisions suggested by the President. But the President's opponents are indulging in a campaign of name calling. They are deliberately taking advantage of the current anti-Communist hysteria to discredit the plan. They do not present their arguments in the light of reason but rather in the heat of emotion. To us, this seems to be the usual tactic of demagogic politicians.

The issue is simple. Are we going to act as though we have learned, however painfully, that this is one world, or will we allow resurgent isolationism to prevent us from making the few sacrifices necessary to assure Europe of some of the necessities which we have so long enjoyed? We made the sacrifices during the war. Is it so difficult now because the guns are silent?

REALITIES AND VALUES

Rabbi Meyer Berlin, President of the World Mizrachi Organization, is reported in a dispatch from Jerusalem to *Religious News Service,* as having taken issue with a statement that, in the future Jewish state, a non-Jew should be eligible to election as President.

We wonder whether the leaders of the Mizrachi in America approve Rabbi Berlin's stand. If they do, we wonder whether they would approve legislation insisting that only a member of the White Protestant majority in this country should be eligible for election to the presidency. And we wonder how they would reconcile Jewish advocacy of racial and religious discrimination in Eretz Yisrael with Hillel's dictum that the essence of the Torah is to refrain from doing to one's neighbor what is hateful to oneself.

▼

American Zionism is often charged with contributing nothing but money to the upbuilding of Eretz Yisrael. That may have been true at one time, but it is certainly not true today. The number of American Jews who have gone to settle permanently in Eretz Yisrael may be relatively small. But the number of Jews who have gone from America to help with their knowledge and experience the development of the Yishuv's institutional life is considerable and has had an appreciable effect in promoting its welfare.

When the history of these years will be written at some future time, the personal contributions of the American women whom Hadassah has sent to assist in the upbuilding of the homeland will be a chapter by itself.

These thoughts have been suggested by news that Mrs. Albert P. Schoolman is about to leave for Eretz Yisrael to direct a project of major importance. Hers will be the task of making adequate advance preparation for receiving the children who will soon be coming in from the DP camps and from Cyprus and elsewhere. The work that she will administer will enable these children to claim their birthright of health, security and happiness, and to grow into responsible and loyal citizens of the new Jewish state. We wish her godspeed and success in her undertaking.

▼

Without being Jewish chauvinists and claiming that democracy

is a Jewish invention, we can safely affirm that it has ample support in Jewish tradition. And, whether or not democracy needs the support of Judaism, Judaism certainly cannot get along in the modern world without democracy.

We therefore commend Dr. Leo L. Honor and the Jewish educators of Philadelphia for introducing into the Jewish Sunday Schools and many of the congregational schools a course in democracy which utilizes the Jewish religious tradition in motivating democratic group relations in the American community. As reported in the *National Jewish Post,* the course gives instruction in "fundamental techniques" that may be used "to combat undemocratic practices and hate movements."

▼

THE ESCO FOUNDATION announces a project which should interest all who wish to see a strengthening of the cultural ties between Eretz Yisrael and the Diaspora. It proposes to bring a young Palestinian composer to the Berkshire Music Center at Tanglewood, Mass., for post-graduate study. The scholarship is to be offered on the basis of a competition which is open to Palestinian born or naturalized Jews, Arabs or Christians under 30 and to accredited Palestinian composers now in the United States.

Eminent musicians both Palestinian and American will be the judges of the contest.

The benefit of the scholarship includes full transportation to and from the center, room and board during the six weeks' session, tuition cost for the composition course, admittance to all concerts, lectures and general activities at the Center, including the Boston Symphony Orchestra's Berkshire Festival.

THE CORNERSTONE OF A MONument to the Jews who perished in the gas chambers and to the heroes of the uprising of the Warsaw ghetto was recently laid on Riverside Drive in New York City overlooking the Hudson River. Jo Davidson has been selected as the sculptor.

In a release of the Office of Jewish Information of the American Jewish Congress, Menahem Boraisha criticizes the choice of memorial. He says, in part:

"Wasn't there an abundance of heroism and sanctity in all the trials since the destruction of the first Temple till the Chmelnitzky pogroms? Did Jews ever dream of erecting stone or bronze memorials to the Ten Martyrs? Or to the victims of the Crusades? Or to those burned at the stake? Prayers, laments and poems were the sole monuments. Memorials in stone or bronze were not in the spirit of Israel. . . . In the present instance, too, a monument was planned in Palestine. But how did they visualize it there? It is to be a huge structure housing documents and historical materials pertaining to the exterminated communities, a library, a reading room, a *yeshivah* and an academy."

He accordingly recommends a similar institution in America, one that would function educationally in the life of American Jewry.

There is merit to Mr. Boraisha's suggestion. A living memorial is more important than one of stone. It is an error, however, to speak of the two as if they were mutually exclusive.

It is also an error to think of any work of art as dead. True, Jews did not until recent times express themselves significantly in sculpture. That, however, is a defect, not a virtue. Sculpture, too, can both express and communicate the Jewish spirit.

Are the Teachings of Jesus the Last Word in Ethics?

By IMMANUEL LEWY

BEFORE we discuss Jesus' teachings we have to clarify what we mean by them. We know that he did not make any notes of his sayings nor did he write down any record of his life. It is doubtful if his disciples did anything like that. The records of the Gospels are the work of enthusiastic followers who believed in the divine mission of the Master and wanted to save his sayings from being forgotten. When the young Christian communities spread and emancipated themselves from Judaism, they needed some scriptures for their own edification, for teaching the young generation and for propaganda among the grown up people. Then some preachers who had heard some of Jesus' teachings from his own lips or those of his disciples or other eye-witnesses wrote down some of his sayings, his parables, his miraculous cures and the pathetic story of his trial and death.

The Problem of Knowing What Jesus Taught

It is quite clear that some of the records used by the compilers of the gospels were written down with the intention of proving to the Jews that all that the ancient Hebrew prophets had said about the coming of the Messiah had literally been fulfilled in the life of Jesus, and to show to the Gentiles, the Greeks, that the new religion was in harmony with, or superior to, the best teachings of the wisest of the Greek thinkers.

Imagine that there had been no written record of Franklin D. Roosevelt's speeches. They had not been broadcast nor printed, but only spoken to friends and followers. Then a few score years after his death some enthusiastic friends would deem it suitable and appropriate to write down what they had heard or had learned about him from other contemporaries. It is quite evident that they would select those addresses which were still of importance for their own times and that they would give them a form appropriate to the needs of their own generation and to the purpose of their propaganda. They would also unwittingly mix up some of his sayings and phrases with those they had heard from other great political speakers of his own days, of earlier or later days. If there were several such collections a conscientious comparative study would indicate what it was that he really had said and what he was merely supposed to have said.

In a similar way we have to discern by a conscientious comparative study of the four gospels what Jesus really said and did, and what he was merely supposed by later devotees to have said and done. Undoubtedly some sayings are attributed to Jesus by the Gospels which he could not have said and deeds are ascribed to him which he could not have done, because they presuppose some terms or conceptions which were unknown in his days. The term "Atomic Age" was not used before Hiroshima. If you would find it in Roosevelt's speeches it is obvious that this phrase was not his. All sayings which imply that Jesus was crucified and had risen as God are evidently the work of authors who lived in a time when the Church had already established the belief in Christ's resurrection and godly nature.

If we cannot make sure today that this or that particular wording goes back to Jesus, we may, however, with some justi-

fication say that, in essence, the general line of his teachings, as we find them recorded in the four gospels, may be correctly imputed to him. Without his remarkable sayings, parables and cures, without his suffering, trial and crucifixion, the Christian communities could not have been established. Even though Paul had never seen his master himself, he would never have fought with such zeal, first against him and then in his behalf, if there had been no such dominant personality.

The Essence of Jesus' Teachings

What is the essence of Jesus' teachings without which the existence of the four gospels would not be understandable? It is this:

The Kingdom of Heaven, foretold by the prophets and sages, is now near at hand. This kingdom is quite different from the existing kingdom. It is the humblest folk and not the wealthy and mighty who shall enter it. All men, especially those who live in misery and humiliation, may enter the Kingdom of God, if they have an unflinching faith in a loving and powerful God, if they love each other, forgive each other their former sins and quarrels and if they are not greedy for wealth or pride. The Kingdom of God is the reverse of the Kingdom of Man. Here rule Mammon, Prestige and Violence; here Love, Faith and Humility.

It has often been said that the great Nazarene has not said anything original. All he said had already been uttered before him by other teachers, sages or prophets. That God wants love more than sacrifices had already been preached by the prophet Hosea; that without faith a nation is doomed could be read in the book of Isaiah; and that religion is something within us, something spiritual, had been emphasized by the prophet Jeremiah. Amos, the oldest of the literary prophets, had taught that there is one ethical law for Jews and for Gentiles; that God does not discriminate in favor or against any race or nation; that He recognizes no favored class, nor chosen people. Ritual and liturgy had been held to be blasphemous if in a community there prevailed oppression and wrong rather than mercy and justice. An old law commanded the Israelite to help his enemies, not to hate nor to bear any grudge against the children of his people. It enjoined explicitly to love not only one's neighbor but also the alien as oneself.

Similar sayings on a high ethical level can also be found in the teachings of the great sages of ancient Egypt, India, China and Greece, some hundreds of years before Jesus was born. Even among higher animals we find instances of aid being given not only to those of one's own kind, but even to strangers. In 1827 two little wren-fledglings had run away from Eckermann, the friend of Goethe. After long searching they were found next day in the nest of robin redbreasts, who fed the little ones together with their own youngsters. When Goethe heard this fact, he said in excitement: "If it be true that this feeding of a stranger goes through all Nature as having the character of a general law, many puzzles would be solved."

Acts of nobility and generosity are not the monopoly of human beings. They are an heritage from our animals ancestors. They are not the general law, either among animals or men. The proportion of noble and generous natures varies in different societies. There have been periods and regions, groups and individuals who had a high level of ethical behavior and there have been others whose standard was low. The appearance of great ethical teachers is not a sign that the general standard of morality of a period or a nation is high. It is often the most

corrupt society which produces the finest ethical teacher.

The Greatness of the Personality of Jesus

The greatness of an ethical teacher does not consist so much in what he preaches, as in what he lives up to. The greatness of Jesus was not the originality of his ethics, but his spell-binding personality. He lived together with the humble folk, the disinherited, the least respected, with the ignorant, poor, diseased, crippled and outcast. He loved this common folk. He shared their troubles and joys. He helped them, encouraged them, cured them, feasted with them and gave their lives worth and meaning. He honored them without flattering or coddling them, without exploiting or patronizing them. He fanned in them the feeling of human dignity and responsibility, and awakened their claim to happiness and greatness. He trusted them and they believed in him. He loved them and they followed him.

Even after a long tiring walk, he cured a foreign woman who asked him for help. Whether she be foreign or native, whether he be tired or fresh, what did it matter? His religion had taught him to love strangers as well as natives. And he took the commandments of his religion seriously, especially the ethical laws, just as the prophets, psalmists and sages had done. His intention was not to alter but to fulfill. New in his message was the belief that the Kingdom of Heaven was near at hand and that it was the humble folk who would enter it. "Blessed are the poor, for they will conquer the earth."

The Nazarene has often been misinterpreted by modern scholars. He was not a liberal humanitarian, nor a revolutionary communist, nor a plebian anarchist, nor an apocalyptic dreamer. He was not a mythological figure of some astral cult, nor the fictitious ideal of a militant church.

Jesus was loyal to the social, religious and economic order in which he was brought up. He rendered unto Caesar what belonged to Caesar. He was more of a sage, a spiritual leader of a movement or order within his religion than he was a prophet. For the prophets spoke in the name of God, but he spoke, like the other sages of his people, in his own name. He was a wandering preacher who lived a simple life. He was convinced that God had chosen him as the savior of his people in this time of turmoil, as foretold by the ancient prophets. He never believed himself to be a God or the son of God. That was a pagan idea, introduced by the Gentile author of the gospel according to St. John, quite blasphemous to a Jewish mind. To Jesus' mind all human beings were sons or children of God in a figurative sense.

He had never had the intention to found a new religion or church. That was the work of others, especially the work of Paul. Jesus was a loyal devotee of the religion of his forefathers. He was not, as some modern writers assume, a pacifist who believed in the policy of non-violence or soft and persuasive methods of propaganda exclusively. As he could burn with *love,* so he could burn with *anger* too. He said to his followers that if they entered a city and would not be well received, the city would suffer a more snister fate than Sodom and Gomorrah. The Kingdom of God meant not only peace but also wailing and gnashing of teeth for those who did not repent. When Jesus was tired and hungry and saw a fig-tree without fruit, he gave vent to his anger and cursed it. That was not divine, of course not, but entirely human and such a record discloses that the Nazarene had a passionate temperament like the ancient prophets of his race.

The Significance of the Sermon on the Mount

It is difficult to say how much of the so-called Sermon on the Mount was Jesus' real teachings. The oldest gospel, that of Mark, does not record such a sermon at all and Luke's gospel has a text quite different from Matthew's. The Sermon on the Mount seems to be the manifesto of the young Church when it had become full-fledged and independent of the synagogue. It was compiled from sayings which Jesus had uttered on various occasions. When the Church separated from the Jews, the leaders made Jesus a second Moses. Like the first savior of his people who proclaimed ethical commandments from Mount Sinai, Christ, the second savior of mankind, delivered a Sermon on the Mount, giving ethical commandments to the whole world.

The compiler of that Sermon put it in the forms of ten new commandments, thereby supplanting the Sinatic laws of the Old Covenant by more idealistic ones. The whole conception was not only alien to Jesus' attitude, but in contradiction to his own words. The real Jesus said: "Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise fall from the law. Whosoever shall break one of the least commandments and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven."

The Manifesto of the new Church, however, ascribes to him these words: "You have heard that it has been said, You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy. But I say unto you, 'Love your enemies.'" Jesus, who knew the law of Moses and the prophets, could never have said that. For there was no law telling Jews to hate the enemy. On the contrary, the law enjoined on the Jew to give practical aid to his enemy if, for example, his enemy's ass was falling under its load. The whole manifesto uses the extravagant language of propaganda, calculated more to fire the imagination of the uninformed than to enlighten their untrained judgment. It therefore condemns in uncompromising terms divorce, taking oath, retributive justice, public prayer, fasting in public and with sour face, economic foresight and possession of money. All the natural desires of men should be radically suppressed in order that men may become purely spiritual and idealistic beings.

All these high-flown demands may be paralleled by sayings of old masters and sages. They were meant, however, as ideals for those who wanted to reach the highest stages of perfection. They were never meant as standard laws to be practiced by the common man in everyday life. No wonder that the Sermon on the Mount has never been practiced as law or ethics in any period or country, in Christendom or anywhere else. It has fascinated idealists and artists of different creeds and countries because of its poetic and uncompromising language, but considered historically, it must be regarded as the hyperbolical manifesto of a new militant church, not as a higher code of practical ethics.

The compiler of the Manifesto took casual remarks of Jesus out of their context and gave them an absolute meaning, which they originally had not at all. The word about turning the other cheek and giving away the second cloak might have been put forward under special circumstances. It might have been said by Jesus in connection with an offender who had really repented. So he warned the offended fellow not to hit back or bear any grudge against the offender, quite in accordance with the law written in *Leviticus* (Ch. 19). Or it might have been taken as a practical advice, as Goldsmith's Vicar of Wakefield took it: "When any one of our relatives," said the vicar, "was found to be a person of bad character, or

troublesome guest, or one we desired to get rid of, upon his leaving my house I ever took care to lend him a riding-coat, or a pair of boots or sometimes a horse of small value, and I always had the satisfaction of finding he never came back to return them."

The original saying about forgiving might have been that which we now read in *Luke* (17:3), "If your brother trespasses against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to you saying, 'I repent,' you shall forgive him." In this form it makes sense and is practical wisdom. Jesus knew too well that even good-hearted people said or did some wrong in excitement which they did not want to have said or done after consideration. If they regretted it, we should be gratified and forgive them, even if they did it again and again. Jesus himself had never said that we ought to forgive our offender in any case, even if he did not repent. He did not refrain from rebuking the offender, often in the harshest words, as for instance in his flaming indignation against hypocrites or in his frontal attack upon money-lenders and dove-sellers in the Temple.

It was not so much the evil deed as the bad heart which he condemned. Even the greatest sinner might have a good heart. He might be the victim of a bad social order; he might have come under a strong temptation, or his bad temper might have conquered him. "If you sow a seed," he said, "you cannot say beforehand whether it will bring good or bad fruit. Therefore you must not weed out the tares or you may root out also the wheat with them." Therefore you must not judge too rashly. "Judge not that ye be not judged." "Let him that is free from sin, cast the first stone."

There lived in Jerusalem a poor woodcutter. His name was Hillel. He was a great sage. Some time before Jesus he had taught that the commandment "Love thy neighbor as thyself" was the essence of the law and all the other laws were only its commentary. The same Hillel also said: "Do not judge anybody until you are in his place." That is exactly what Jesus also meant. Moral indignation is often a smoke-screen for our self-righteousness. We blame others because we are too proud to blame ourselves.

Like his teacher Hillel, Jesus had not the intention to bar human judgment and indignation. Both warn us to be cautious and considerate in our judgments. The commandment to love our neighbor does not mean that we shall cease fighting against wrong and sin. Of course not. Love is not identical with softness and complacency. Love promises some effort on our part to help our neighbor to live up to his finest possibilities. If you cannot do it with a smile, you may rebuke him firmly and fearlessly. First, as Matthew told us in his gospel, you may rebuke him in private. If that fails, you may do it in the presence of two or three witnesses, and if even this is not successful, you may repeat it before the whole community. These three stages recommended by Matthew are exactly the same prescribed by the rabbinical law. Here, as in the case of retribution, Jesus had followed the ethical wisdom of his people. The author of the Sermon on the Mount took some of Jesus' sayings out of their original context and made them radical and absolute rules.

Influences That Shaped the Personality of Jesus

The greatness of a personality is not his own achievement alone, but, in large measure, results from a coincidence of favorable conditions: wise parents, capable teachers, good temperament, peaceful home, numerous opportunities, influence of spell-binding personalities, etc. Man's

greatness is partly man's own merit, and partly God's work, to put it theologically. That was also true in the case of Jesus. What factors worked together to create this unique personality?

About Jesus' childhood and youth we have no records. What we read about it in the Gospels is legendary and without any historical value. So we are left to guesswork and speculation. Modern psychology, however, has taught us the great influence on our mental and spiritual outlook of early childhood impressions and of bodily abnormalities and defects. So I may assume that the child Jesus might have come under the spell of one or more fascinating personalities belonging to the lowest strata of society.

He might have also suffered from some bodily defect. Either he was crippled, ugly, very delicate and tender, or he suffered from weak eyes, a weak heart, a weak stomach or weak lungs. Consumptive people, we know, have often been great idealists. Such an abnormality makes a boy introverted, introspective, so that his emotion, imagination and activity are turned toward inwardness, spirituality and dreaminess. Jesus might have loved his father, who according to Jewish custom was also his teacher, with inordinate fervor. He might have lost him early, so that he looked as a substitute with passionate yearning for his heavenly Father. He might have discovered early that he had some spiritual abilities to heal mental and nervous diseases, an unerring gift of penetration and a spell-binding authority fascinating people by word and look.

When about thirty years old, he heard of John the baptist, a personality not unlike his own. Jesus followed him and loved him. John's execution brought a crisis to his inner life. It was due to this crisis that he felt his call. Within him grew the firm conviction that God had chosen him to continue and improve the uncompleted work of his beloved master. His spiritual gifts were the evidence of his being an instrument of a divine mission.

Like John, he realized that the ruling classes of his time were corrupt and wicked. He felt great sympathy for the humble folk over whom he exercised authority and cast a spell. He had an unflinching faith and great courage. Mesmerized by his warm-hearted love and comforting words, the humble folk flocked to him. They listened with reverence to his well-coined sayings and masterly parables. They told one another of his marvelous cures, which enhanced his prestige and popularity among the rural population.

Where there is much sun there is also much shadow. No greatness, without weakness. Everybody has the vices of his virtues, and the virtues of his vices. The greatness of Jesus was his strong faith in a divine order, his ardent love of humble folk, his emphasis on spiritual values. His weakness was his trustfulness. He trusted everybody, even a Judas Iscariot, and so he was betrayed. He was disavowed by his best disciples at the time of his arrest.

Jesus realized the spell he cast on the common man in the provinces. So he believed that he would be able to bring under his spell even the educated people in the cities. He underestimated the power of vested interests, the intrigues of the priests, the anxieties of the orthodox, the callousness of the rulers and the brutality of the soldiers. Even a mountain-moving faith could not breach this fortress of skepticism, cynicism, bigotry, inertia and selfishness. Love and persuasion, penetration and understanding may be a powerful help in winning the simple-minded, disinherited and crippled, but they failed to win over the subtle-minded possessors of wealth and power. That was the tragedy of this noble heart. He overstressed the bright aspects of the Universe and was

surprised by its darkness. So he died feeling that God, the Loving Father God, had forsaken him.

We are inclined to condone excess of trust. But Nature and History penalize it, often very severely. Not seldom they punish it with death. We have learned the lesson in the last thirty years. The Weimar Republic in Germany was overthrown by the Nazis, because of the excessive confidence of its democratic rulers. The League of Nations failed and was succeeded by the most catastrophic World War, because the organizers of that League in their trustfulness had not taken into account the need of meeting efficaciously the darker powers in man. And so those powers connived at their first aggressions. When the aggressive impulses were encouraged by the realization that they could do what they wished unrestricted and unchecked, the aggressors became more audacious. They invaded one country after another, looting what they could take and annihilating what stood in their way.

Where the Ethical Doctrine of Jesus Is Inadequate

This brings us to our conclusion. Our subject was: Are the teachings of Jesus the last word in Ethics? We have seen that Jesus preached the ethical teachings he found among the best of his nation. He did not promulgate a new ethical doctrine. If, therefore, Christian theologians hold that his ethics is the last word on the subject, they practically mean that the ethical teachings of the great Hebrew prophets and Jewish sages of pre-Christian times had attained the highest level human ethics could achieve.

Now undoubtedly the people of Israel had a fairly great number of fine ethical teachers. They all stem from one great literary and ethical genius, who coined the pattern followed by others. This first Hebrew genius lived under the Kings David and Saul. He created the finest figures and stories of the pre-prophetic literature. He was familiar with the best cultural ideas produced by the civilizations of ancient Egypt and the Near East. These countries were also the cradle of the old Greek ethics, the teachings of Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle and the Stoa. The Roman Empire was a melting pot of races and ideas. Palestine, lying at the crossroad of West and East, was a reservoir into which flowed Hebrew, Egyptian, Mesopotamian, Persian and Greek ideas. Jesus lived in a time in which the flood of these ideas had attained its culmination. No wonder that the Christian ethics has been a stimulus to the ethical thought of the Middle Ages, the Renaissance and the Modern Age.

The great ethical thinkers of the modern world have partly accepted, partly improved upon, and partly opposed this cultural heritage from the ancient world. The greatest stumbling-block for the modern man is that part in the ethics of Jesus which stems from his excess of confidence. He overrated the power of faith, his own spiritual strength and the noble heart of the humble folk. That excess led to his tragic death and should become a great warning for future generations.

Jesus' death on the cross symbolizes an experience which might give mankind an important lesson. What matters in ethics is not to set up lofty demands for an utopian Kingdom of Heaven expected to be near at hand. What counts is that justice, righteousness and generosity become efficient in human society by being backed through real material power. Society must be well planned and organized so that man cannot but live in accordance with ethical demands. The rulers of society, even if they are driven by power and pleasure motives, have to find every

way barred that is indecent, unfair and unjust. Moral improvement starts in the individual, but ends in institutions. The highest spirituality of a few men of quality is powerless if it does not succeed in permeating the whole atmosphere of a society.

The tragic death of Jesus did not teach his followers this lesson of ethical realism. They were not taught to accept his death as a reality and his life as that of a human being. They escaped reality by believing in his resurrection and divinity. So Christianity came to foster the great illusion that man can be redeemed by the strength of his faith. Looking forward to the Kingdom of Heaven, it neglected the material forces of earth, leaving them unredeemed.

Man must give up this illusion. This Universe does not follow up a one-track road. If society underscores one particular aspect of life and suppresses other likewise natural aspects, those suppressed will re-emerge convulsively and explosively. If we encourage faith in an eternal world, we must encourage as well criticism of life based on reason and experience. If we would propagate universal love and kindness, we must simultaneously insist on justice and firmness towards those who may abuse our kindness and turn it to the service of their will to power and lust. If we stand for a spiritualization of Man's desires, we must look after material security, sanity and decency of environment. As long as the elemental needs of food, clothing and shelter, enjoyable work and recreation are not generally gratified in a satisfactory way, man's desires refuse to be spiritualized.

What we need today is not so much a refinement of ethical doctrines as the efficient materialization of the finest ethical teaching of all the great masters of wisdom including that of Jesus of Nazareth. Yet let us not exclude the greatest of his lessons, given to us by his human life and human death.

Toward Cooperation Between Synagogue, Community Council and Community Center

By MAX WEINE

THE problem of the relationship of synagogues to Federations or Community Councils and to Community Centers is an indication of the growing pains that American Jewry has to suffer in attaining democratic community organization. The synagogue is the oldest community institution in Jewish life. Its functions throughout the ages have been manifold. On the contemporary scene in particular, each synagogue, in order to be successful and to answer the needs of its members, tries to give as many different types of services as it possibly can. In addition to affording an opportunity for public worship, it also serves as an educational institution for both children and adults. It sponsors cultural and social activities of a specifically Jewish nature as well as secular public forums, and celebrations in observance of Jewish and American holidays and other occasions. In recent years the idea of a Synagogue-Center has caught the imagination of many. Where facilities are available, the synagogue also becomes a place for recreation, athletic activities, musical and artistic interests, and the like. The synagogue has thus become everything that its name in-

dicates — *bet keneset* — a house of gathering. With its auditorium and meeting rooms made available to organizations, it can become the very hub and nucleus of an active Jewish community.

In recent years a new phenomenon has arisen on the horizon of Jewish community life, the coordinating communal agency such as the Federation, and, more particularly, the Jewish Community Council. Both of these indicate an effort to integrate the entire community on an overall democratic basis. Whether it be for the purpose of fund-raising, civic-protective work, social service, culture or education its approach is to the community as a whole. As these functions increase in number and intensity they are bound to overlap with those of the synagogue if not to come into actual conflict with them. Whether the community be small or large, the synagogues few or many, and the central community strong or weak, there is a situation here that will have to be resolved before a satisfactory form of community life can be evolved.

The question calling for an answer is: What, in the pattern of community life are the proper respective functions of the synagogue and of the community, as it operates through a Federation or a Council? Which activities can a synagogue properly include within its realm and which should it leave to the community? And, vice versa, when must the community put a stop to the branching out of its activities lest it break into the synagogue's proper sphere of work and service?

No Hard and Fast Division Between the Religious and the Secular

In posing these questions there is danger of making a hard and fast division between the secular and religious. This is a tendency of thought against which we must be on guard. Ever since the beginning of what we call "modern times" we are inclined to think in terms of separation of church and state and all that this separation implies. Everything in the line of religion is carefully penned into a separate compartment and the rest of life is the domain of the secular. The evils involved in this dichotomy far outnumber the advantages.

Without engaging in this discussion of the relations of the sacred and the secular, however, let us assume, for the purpose of this paper, that what we are searching for is not division but integration and harmony. We are building a community. There should be no struggle for control between secular and religious interests or institutions. The manifold activities of the community, without being labeled, should each have its proper place and influence. This can be accomplished if a few broad principles of operation are developed and constantly held in mind. We will find as we go along, that there are hardly any activities in which either the secular or the religious interest has absolute control. There is always a measure of cooperation and mutuality in every aspect of communal activity. For basic to every other consideration is the fact that we are all functioning as Jews. Unity does not preclude variety of interests, and differences of opinion or point of view should not remove the basis for cooperation.

Community Cooperation in Respect to Worship

Let us take the most exclusive function of the synagogue: worship. Certainly no community power should in any way regulate or interfere with any individual synagogue in the fulfillment of this function. Yet even here situations occasionally arise where the cooperation of a Federation or of a Community Council can exert a very wholesome influence. The springing up of "mushroom synagogues," for instance, during the High Holiday period confronts

the community with an unhealthy condition that individual synagogues are powerless to handle. Only a community with its avenues of community influence and pressure can eliminate or even regulate and reduce this evil. Provision of adequate facilities for worship at this period of the year might properly become a community problem. A temporary place of worship thus provided is no longer a "mushroom" institution. In this respect, the community is in a position to offer its services, but the sphere of worship still remains exclusively the domain of the synagogue.

Community Cooperation in Respect to Education

Education is another field in which the synagogue and the community have on a number of occasions come into sharp conflict. In the field of elementary education we find ourselves in the transition period where the future of the community talmud torah is being very seriously threatened, and the synagogue school seems to be the coming form of educational institution. Without trying to chart the future course of development in the field of Jewish education there is no one who will with reason challenge the right of the synagogue to operate a school and to provide the children of its members or of the neighborhood with a Jewish education.

However, here also there is a part that the community not only can but should play. The problems confronting the individual school, whether a synagogue institution or a talmud torah, are often beyond its own individual ability to meet. Jewish education is very expensive—far too costly for the average synagogue to finance. Small unit schools make the engaging of trained instructors or supervisors out of the question, and a rabbi must at best regard his duties to the school as secondary to those of his office as rabbi. Here the community is in a position to assist the synagogue or talmud torah in its work. Deficit financing, community supervision, setting of minimum standards, assistance in various other aspects of the work can be supplied by a community Bureau of Jewish Education. Such a Bureau should in no way threaten the autonomy of any individual school. It should, rather, be in a position to supply the trained professional assistance that an individual institution cannot itself engage, and should be a coordinating service group to assist the school where it needs it and asks for it.

A word is in place here about adult education. Many synagogues rightfully conduct classes for adults. If a synagogue is large in membership or if it is the only synagogue in the community, it could carry out a successful program of adult Jewish education. However, as in the field of elementary education, it may often be found that the program may be carried out more successfully with community cooperation where several synagogues or institutions join in a program of adult education. A neutral place like a Jewish Community Center may be the best place where such an undertaking can be housed. The Community Center and the synagogue can here join in a fruitful cooperative venture that will benefit the entire community. The Center program will have the necessary Jewish content and the synagogue will be accomplishing its program with sustained success.

When we come to the field of cultural activities of a more informal nature, whether specifically Jewish or general (forums, discussions, concerts, drama, etc.) the situation is far more complicated. But here too a *modus vivendi* can and should be worked out, and the Community Council or Federation should be in a position to assist in working out plans for avoiding conflicts or overlapping

where the community interest is endangered. No one will deny that a synagogue has the right to sponsor lecture series, concerts, or any other type of cultural activity. And these need not be exclusively Jewish, though, it must be said, that the synagogue as an institution would be failing in its function if the emphasis were not Jewish. The synagogue should primarily serve its members, but also has a perfect right, in fact, a duty, to make its services available to the general community.

What will be the case, however, where there are two or several overlapping or conflicting programs of that nature? Here is where the central community agency has the power and the duty to act.

Community Cooperation in Respect to Informal Cultural Activity

Does the community as such have a right to engage in cultural activity of this nature? Definitely, yes. Conducting such programs is not an integral function of the synagogue as such. Any other organization in the community has that right as well. And for the Community Center it is practically a *raison d'être.* Especially where there is no other institution that supplies this need, the Community Center should regard it as its duty to do so. Here also the community interest should be of paramount consideration, and it may even be, though it should not come to that point, that a Federation may have to mediate between its own Community Center and another institution.

We come now to a consideration of the function of the Community Center in relation to the synagogue. Here we come to grips with the basic issue, for the synagogue has in many cases expanded into a Synagogue-Center, and in not a few cases we find a Center housing a synagogue. In fact the idea of a Synagogue-Center is being pushed as a solution for the division between the secular and the religious in Jewish life.

A conflict in this case can come where there is an agency in the community for the operation of a Center with its cultural, social, educational activities which are specifically Jewish only insofar as they offer an opportunity for Jews to do things together. Most cities of any size have a Center. (Where the Center as an institution does not exist, there is no reason why the Synagogue should not supply the lack. In fact it would be derelict in its duties if it did not provide an opportunity for Jews to gather for whatever wholesome purpose could bring them under the same roof.) The question arises where the synagogue and Center come into conflict with each other when the synagogue branches out into Center activities. The synagogue has a job to do in the field of religion, education, and personal service to its members. Very few would hazard a statement that it is fulfilling this function adequately. For it to undertake to supply a Center program as a means of attracting people to the institution, or even for its own sake is to assume a burden of work and financing that could more profitably, in view of the purpose of the Synagogue, be directed elsewhere. The informal group activities of a social, cultural, or athletic nature are specifically the function of the Center.

This does not mean that the synagogue has no part in them whatever. Just as the Federation or Community Council is in a position to offer its assistance in specifically synagogue functions, so here too the synagogue can and should offer its assistance in implementing a Center program. It can make its physical facilities available for group meetings or other Center activities. It can make available wherever possible, the time of its personnel, or any other form of assistance. But the over-

all program should at all times be under Center sponsorship and supervision.

The Role of the Rabbi

How does the rabbi fit into this picture? In addition to his specifically congregational functions he is and should be the servant of the community. Naturally the synagogue and its program is his primary responsibility. But a professional educator will always value the assistance, advice, and cooperation of the rabbi. And where there is no professional educator, the rabbi must add these educational activities to his regular duties and do the best he can. So also in the Federation or the Community Council and the Center. As one who is steeped in Jewish and general knowledge and has a keen and direct sense of responsibility for the preservation and development of Jewish life and values, his word should be given serious consideration in the lay counsels of the community. The direction of the Center or community is not exclusively his function, but he undoubtedly understands certain requirements of a center or community program better than the average layman does.

This paper does not by any means cover every aspect of community life as it affects the synagogue and the Federation or Community Council in their mutual relationships. Its purpose is rather to indicate a promising approach to friendly cooperation and to the avoidance of conflict. For what all are primariy interested in is the development of a well integrated and smoothly functioning Jewish community.

Book Notes

A COMMENTARY ON PALESTINE POLITICS

PALESTINE: A Study of Jewish, Arab, and British Policies. Published for the Esco Foundation for Palestine, Inc., by Yale University Press, 2 vols., 1,380 pp. $12.00.

IN the flood of books on the Palestine question, this one is outstanding not only by virtue of its length and comprehensiveness. In these respects it is matched in the English literature on Palestine only by Fannie Fern Andrews' long-outdated study. It has a special importance as a well-planned reference book covering not only British policy, as is the general practice, but the programs and policies of the Jews and Arabs as well. The texts stating those policies are, in the case of brief documents, quoted fully and in other cases, they are exhaustively abstracted, as they arise in the exposition. An extensive bibliography of 50 pages plus 100 pages of detailed index provide for easy reference to these texts in the book itself and in the sources.

As far as British policy in Palestine is concerned, it would not seem that there is any need for a new study on this subject after the compact, thorough, and incisive analysis of Paul Hanna's *British Policy in Palestine,* to which this book makes frequent reference. Nevertheless, since the additional material of Hebrew newspapers and the Hebrew studies of Gelber and Medzini were accessible to the authors of this book, they were able to round out the picture in some respects. The major contribution of the book as a record of the diplomatic history of Palestine is its presentation of Jewish and Arab

policies. It is particularly thorough in detailing the various efforts at Jewish-Arab *rapprochement* since World War I. In this field it is a pioneer work and fills a serious gap in the literature on Palestine.

Palestine deals with "Jewish, Arab, and British policies" not only through its comments on official documents. It also goes extensively into the administration and development of the country, in order to study the policies of the three parties in action. Consequently, the book approaches the scope of an encyclopedic study of Palestine in the period since the inception of the Jewish movement to return to Zion.

Because it was so conceived, the book necessarily required the cooperation of a large number of experts in specific fields: an introductory note lists twenty such authorities. The book plainly reflects the special knowledge of several of its distinguished contributors in its full discussion of certain topics. Thus, although it is obvious that educational policy is closely connected with the implicit problem of the study, namely, Arab-Jewish rapprochement, the detailed report and full discussion on this problem may undoubtedly be attributed in part also to the special interests of the Director of the Esco Palestine Study. An even more engaging illustration is the section on the "Christian Communities in Palestine" and their attitudes on Arab-Jewish relations. This section is printed without alteration of style or manner just as it was submitted, in the form of an informal memorandum, by W. F. Albright, and it stands out like afternoon tea from its surroundings.

On the other hand, certain important topics are sketched in a rapid and far from adequate recital of bare facts unillumined by discussion. Included among these are such obviously significant subjects as communal organization and social trends, the evolution of political parties, economic problems, and the development of colonization. The special interests of the contributors are, perhaps, partly responsible for these shortcomings as well as for the strong points of the book. But, apparently another element is involved.

The book seems to suffer from some uncertainty of purpose. One would guess that it was originally conceived as a thematic discussion and analysis of the main problems which divided Jewish, Arab, and British policies, and of possible solutions of these points. The main preoccupation of the Director in planning the study seems to have been the problem of Arab-Jewish relations in all its ramifications. The material gathered on these questions went only halfway toward an encyclopedic record of Palestine under the Mandate, and, on the other hand, it was not sufficiently digested to be a cogent presentation of findings on the original main problems. This is particularly unfortunate, because a rigorous analysis of the bearing on Arab-Jewish relations of political and communal organization, economic development, and colonization would have been a really significant achievement. As it stands, the book fails to be a balanced reference work on all phases of Palestine under the Mandate; and as an investigation of a specific problem or problems, it seems to be unnecessary inconclusive and overloaded with extraneous details.

The book was completed over two years ago. Even with an added supplement, chronicling events of the period April, 1945, to April, 1946, it must necessarily appear dated in the light of developments of the past year. But, as a comprehensive guide to the texts on the political and social history of Palestine, in the most broadly conceived sense, and particularly on Arab-Jewish relations in the period from World War I to World War II, the book is unrivaled in the English literature on the subject.

BEN HALPERN

Random Thoughts

THOSE who object to making the survival of the Jewish people the motive of Jewish activity or ritual observance forget one thing: that to survive in the kind of world we have these days is itself an achievement that calls for the exercise of our highest powers.

* * *

To Samuel Johnson, being able to kick a stone was sufficient proof that *matter* is real.

To some people, being able to kick somebody they don't happen to like is sufficient proof that *life* is real.

* * *

The Chinese claim that, of white jade alone, there are a hundred colors.

Why then may there not be at least a hundred ways of believing in God?

* * *

In our competitive civilization "ideas are weapons," and to be educated is to be armed.

* * *

One of the most striking changes in the mentality of human beings is highlighted by the fact that the Prophet Ezekiel found it difficult to convince his contemporaries that children should not suffer for the sins of their parents.

They thought that it was nothing more than just that children should be penalized for their parents' sins.

Apparently it is not enough to *demand* justice. It is even more important, though far more difficult, to *define* justice.

* * *

It is not only religion that has to resort to all kinds of devices to win the ear of the public.

To draw the crowd to listen to what the atom bomb has in store for us, a comedian had to be "co-starred" with a Nobel Prize Chemist at a recent mass-meeting.

A tragedian would have been more appropriate, but that would have kept away the crowd.

* * *

Those who deem it presumption to make any changes in our traditional prayers so as to have them conform with our present-day conception of God and man would do well to follow the spirit of our tradition instead of its letter.

Our Sages went to great lengths in altering two important biblical texts which they introduced into the liturgy.

In the text which says of God that "He will not hold guiltless him who commits sin," the traditional liturgy deliberately omits the "not."

In the text which describes God as "He that maketh peace and createth evil," it deliberately replaces the word "evil" with "everything."

* * *

Soil that is denuded of vegetation is washed away by rains.

A civilization that does not produce esthetic, moral or spiritual values is washed away by the currents of political and economic change.

* * *

Why do we Jews have three kinds of synagogues: Orthodox, Reform and Conservative?

Perhaps the answer may be found in

the story Bennet Cerf told not long ago.

It is about a man who had risen from proverty to riches and who had acquired an extravagant estate.

The guests whom he had invited to view his estate were surprised to find three swimming pools. Two were filled and one was empty.

He explained that one had warm water and another had cold water.

But why was one empty?

"You'd be surprised," he replied, "how many of my guests can't swim."

M. M. K.

CORRESPONDENCE

A Reaction to Resolutions of "World Conference on Jewish Education"

Sirs:

I have just read your issues of October 17th and 31st relative to the "World Conference on Jewish Education" and the resolutions adopted there. I was amazed and shocked that American educators who participated, sixty in number, according to Dr. Dushkin's article, should sanction the impertinence of some of these resolutions.

Is it possible that American Jewish educators, who apparently represented American Jewish education organizations, and whose participation "records the decisive role played by American Jewry" did not recognize the stigma on American Jewry implied in resolutions two, four and nine? I wonder what is American or Jewish in the philosophy behind these resolutions.

I cannot imagine that Jewish educators, who are American citizens, should not have vigorously insisted that the goal of American Jewish education is primarily to teach us to live integrated lives as Jews in the United States while recognizing our relationship with all other Jews. What understanding and appreciation of the role of the Jew in the United States did these American educators display in accepting these resolutions? Imagine American Jewish educators sanctioning the Jews of Poland, Russia, Rumania or other parts of the world imposing on Jews in the United States the dictum, that the proper Jewish education in the United States is an "all inclusive Hebrew and secular education curriculum in day schools." Shall we who are interested in Jewish education now vote to abolish our public school system, vote for a parochial school system and divide the United States student community into Jewish and non-Jewish schools? This obsequious acceptance of such a shocking, un-American principle by American Jewish educators is incredible.

Even more frightening was it to learn that American educators condone resolution nine. Some of the Jewish educators present at the Conference are recognized as outstanding men in the field of Jewish education in the Diaspora. What shall we say, who are not educators, but who are interested primarily that our children should receive the kind of Jewish education which is adaptable to our life in this country? Logically are we called on to say to these educators, "You have received the best Jewish education this country affords; you are now the epitome of the product of Jewish education in the Diaspora; you accepted the principles of resolution nine; please show the world how successfully Jewish education practices resolution nine in the United States; please emigrate."

We have often heard it argued that if there will be a Jewish State it will react against Jews in the United States, since anti-Semites will say, "Get out! Go back to your own State, Palestine!" Little could one imagine that this bugaboo might become a reality and be advocated, not by anti-Semites, but by American Jewish educators!

What has happened to the whole program of Reconstructionism, of the Jewish Education Committee, of the American Association for Jewish Education and the host of other education institutions and of the individuals who for years have preached, "Educate yourself in Jewish history, Jewish civilization, Jewish affairs, so that you may become an informed Jew, a better American, so that you may contribute your Jewish heritage to American culture, etc."

Frankly, I am very worried. Shall our children be educated by advocates of the principles embodied in these resolutions or under a program based upon these principles as a goal? As you know, I have long upheld Jewish education here as of primary importance in Jewish life. To this end, I have contributed thought, time and funds. I have always stood up for the place of the Jew in the United States, for his rights, for his obligations. These un-American resolutions and their acceptance by American educators who have been our leaders and who apparently played "such a decisive role in this World Union" have literally shaken me to my roots.

I was hardly prepared to see American Jewry cast aside by our own Jewish educators.

FRANK COHEN